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through the text-books on evidence and digests into a concisely classified form.

Presumptions figure so conspicuously in every trial, that this convenient book, with its very full table of cases cited as authority, should prove of inestimable value to the busy practitioner.

R. B. W.

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LYONS' COMMERCIAL LAW. A Text-book for Schools and Colleges and a Book of Reference. By J. A. LYONS, formerly a Member of the Chicago Bar. Pp. 252. Chicago and New York: Powers & Lyons. 1902.

This work is a brief exposition of the subject it purports to set forth. There is an introduction containing divers legal definitions, a chapter of three pages which tells all about property, both real and personal and how it may be held, in severalty, joint-tenancy and tenancy in common; then follow nine chapters dealing with the subject of contracts. We next have discussed: Negotiable Instruments, Guaranty and Suretyship, Sale of Personal Property, Bailment, Agency, Partnership, Corporations, Insurance and Real Estate.

These voluminous subjects of law are treated in two hundred and twenty-eight pages. The definitions, explanations and maxims are accurate as far as they go. They are as clear as could be expected with such meagre treatment.

It is very doubtful whether such a book will be of service to the law or help those who are to use it with no further insight into the subject. A good lawyer, or even student of law, who enters into the pursuit thereof seriously, knows that law is no subject which can be studied in such an incomplete manner, viz: glibly memorizing some definitions, unintelligible to a youth in his teens, and only reading enough of the subject to get a smattering and as a consequence an entirely incorrect conception of it.

This book is to be used in teaching commercial branches and is to be placed in the hands of children twelve years of age and upwards, the teacher in many instances having no more knowledge of the subject than what he has derived from perusing similar works. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" and the effect of such a book in the hands of those who will use it, will be to puff them up with the idea that they are lawyers of eminent legal ability. It generally proves to be the case that in proportion as one is ignorant of a subject, the more he thinks he knows, and the more one knows the more he is impressed with the incompleteness of his knowledge. It therefore seems that a book of this sort will do great harm, coming as it will into the hands of those immature and incapable of understanding what they read. They will undertake to give counsel to

others and to act themselves on what they conceive to be the law, to the injury of all parties concerned. Such books should prove a good thing in making business for the legal profession. Parties will, to their sorrow, undertake to be their own lawyers and ultimately be obliged to turn to a lawyer to extricate them from the difficulties into which they have fallen. There is a popular idea nowadays that it is a waste of time to spend so many years in school and college. Some are attempting to shorten courses and cheapen degrees. The contagion extends also to preparatory and high schools. An education cannot be ready-made in a year or two. It would be far better for a boy not to be in school at all than be vainly attempting to secure in two years what can be only acquired in thrice that period. His two years' work will give him the notion that he "knows it all," and acting on the presumption, he will, to his subsequent damage, learn otherwise and be worse off than if he had never learned anything.

The statements in this book are culled from Blackstone and other writers and are, of course, not incorrect, but set forth as they are in a disjointed, abbreviated form and being the only knowledge the pupil will have, we think, for reasons above given, that the result will be disastrous to the party who uses the book and to those who are led to act on his advice.

W. H. M.

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#### NOTES ON RECENT LEADING ARTICLES IN LEGAL PUBLICATIONS.

##### YALE LAW JOURNAL.—June.

*The Negro Question.* John R. Dos Passos. The wise words of Andrew Johnson in vetoing the District of Columbia Suffrage Bill of January 5, 1867, which was to confer the suffrage on the negroes of the district, begin this article. The condition which Johnson prophesied has arrived, and it is now possible to see that it was "nothing less than a radical infraction of the true principles of suffrage by one stroke of the legislative wand, as it were, to suddenly endow those poor ignorant blacks with the power to vote." The author, who, we may believe with sincerity, claims to be a friend of the negro, states at large the argument against negro suffrage. He proposes that the question be left to the states, and the fifteenth amendment be repealed with section two of the fourteenth amendment.

*The New Code of International Family Law.* Simeon E. Baldwin. The provisions of the international conventions of 1902, in regard to marriage, divorce, and the guardianship of minors, are given as forming a new code of international family law. They are not, however, considered to be suited as a whole to the conditions which exist in this country.

*Honorary Degrees.* Henry H. Ingersoll. The sale of such degrees by a "College of Law" for ten dollars each, is the text of this paper. It is claimed that the grant of corporate powers almost for the asking, and for almost every imaginable purpose, is responsible for the existence of such frauds upon the public.